

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 AF-10 AID-20 RSR-01 /146 W

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R 020701 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1690
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
DIA WASHDC
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 2074

KUWAIT PASS ABU DHABI AND MUSCAT

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, MCAP, IR

SUBJ: IRAN AND PERSIAN GULF

1. EMBASSY DCM AND CONSUL CLEMENT OF KHORRAMSHAHR
RECENTLY COMPLETED 1000- MILE CAR TRIP ALONG COAST FROM
BANDAR- ABBAS TO KHORRAMSHAHR WHICH AFFORDED NEW IN-
SIGHTS INTO IRANIAN ACTIVITIES ALONG LARGE PART OF ITS
SOUTHERN AND SOUTHWESTERN FRONTIERS ON PERSIAN GULF.
TWO GENERAL IMPRESSIONS EMERGED.

2. FIRST: THIS LONG- NEGLECTED AREA WITH GHOST TOWNS
AND DWINDLING POPULATION SURVIVING MAINLY ON SMUGGLING
AND FISHING NOW FACES A BRIGHTER FUTURE. AREA IS
BEGINNING TO RECEIVE LARGER SHARE OF IRAN' S DEVELOPMENT
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RESOURCES AND ALL ALONG COAST THERE IS EVIDENCE OF NEW ACTIVITY. PRINCIPAL PORTS OF BUSHIRE, BANDAR- LENGEH AND BANDAR- ABBAS ARE BEING LINKED BY ROAD, AND IN TURN NEW ROAD OR RAIL NETWORKS ARE LINKING THEM WITH REST OF COUNTRY. AIRPORTS ARE BEING EXPANDED AND PORTS DEEPEMED AND WIDENED. BANDAR- ABBAS COULD WELL DEVELOP AS MAJOR PORT FOR IRAN' S MINERAL EXPORTS, ESPECIALLY COPPER, AND EVENTUALLY FOR AFGHANISTAN' S TRADE. IN ADDITION TO THESE GULF PORTS THERE IS ALSO CHAH BAHAR OVERLOOKING INDIAN OCEAN, WHERE CONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION ARE ACTIVELY UNDERWAY (TEHRAN 1766). PICTURE THAT EMERGES FROM ALL THIS IS FAR- REACHING AND AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM WHICH WILL FURTHER STRENGTHEN COUNTRY, DEVELOP GREATER SENSE OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN WHAT HAVE BEEN REMOTE AND NEGLECTED BORDER AREAS, AND LEND GREATER CREDENCE TO IRAN' S BOAST THAT IT WISHES BECOME MARITIME NATION.

3. SECOND GENERAL IMPRESSION IS OF DEVELOPMENT OF A SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY PRESENCE AND BASES ALONG THE PERSIAN GULF. BANDAR- ABBAS WITHIN SIX MONTHS IS TO BE DESIGNATED AS HEADQUARTERS PERSIAN GULF COMMAND AND LARGE- SCALE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION FOR HOUSING, ETC. IS UNDERWAY. SIMILARLY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE BASES AT BUSHIRE ARE BEING DEVELOPED AND WHEN COMPLETED WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE BUSHIRE' S POPULATION. WORK ON NAVAL AND AIR BASE AT CHAR BAHAR HAS STARTED AND NAVAL BASE AT KHARG ISLAND IS BEING RE- ENFORCED AND EXPANDED.

4. WE INTERPRET THIS AS REFLECTING SHAH' S DESIRE (A) TO PROTECT INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT, EXPENSIVE AND VULNERABLE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES IN BEING OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN THE AREA (KHARG ISLAND, LNG PLANTS, ETC.) FROM OVERT OR COVERT ATTACK, (B) TO PROVIDE MUSCLE IN ANY KIND OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORT WITH OTHER LITTORAL STATES TO ENSURE PEACE AND STABILITY IN GULF OR, IF NECESSARY, TO GO IT ALONE TO ENSURE THAT IRAN' S LIFELINE THROUGH THE HORMOZ STRAIT IS SECURE, AND (C) EVENTUALLY TO DEVELOP CAPABILITY FOR QUICK ACTION OR REACTION SHOULD REGIMES ON OTHER SIDE OF GULF REQUEST HELP OR SUCCUMB TO SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS THREATENING PEACE AND STABILITY OF ARAB SIDE OF GULF.

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5. DETAILS BY AIRGRAM.

HELMS

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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30 JUN 2005

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